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S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE
CATHEDRAL CHURCH
OF
S A L I S B U R Y,
OCTOBER 6, 1745.

On Occasion of the REBELLION in *Scotland*.

BY THE
Right Reverend THOMAS *Lord Bishop*
of SALISBURY. *Sherlock*
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JUDGES ii. 7.

And---The people served the LORD all the days of JOSHUA, and all the days of the elders that out-lived JOSHUA, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for ISRAEL.

THUS far all is well: God had been extremely gracious and merciful to *Israel*; and those who had seen his wonders, and had felt the miseries from which he had delivered them, retained a grateful remembrance of his goodness. But the case quickly altered: No sooner were the men, who had seen the works of the Lord, gathered unto their fathers, but there arose another Generation after them, which knew not the Lord, not yet the works which he had done for *Israel*: and the children of *Israel* did evil in the sight of the Lord. The effects of their departing from GOD, their Deliverer, are described at the 14th verse: *And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and he delivered them into the hands of the spoilers that spoiled them; and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.*

You have now the case of the *Israelites* fully before you. I wish it was a *Singular* case, and that the rest of the people of G O D stood clear from the like imputation. If they do, happy are they; if they do not, they have great reason to fear, that the same cause will produce the same effect; and that they likewise shall be sold into the hands of their enemies.

It is but a melancholy reflection, to think that the misbehaviour here charged upon the people of *Israel*, is almost a natural effect of the present degenerate and corrupted state of nature. We receive benefits with great warmth and zeal of gratitude, and we possess and enjoy them with great coldness and indifference; and too often with a total forgetfulness of the hand that bestowed them. This temper discovers itself in the common affairs of life, and the mutual intercourse that men have with men. Those, who are able to help us, are courted and caressed as long as we want their assistance; are honoured and revered whilst they afford it; and as soon as they have made us happy, we begin to think they did us but justice; they gave us only what we had a right to; and the acknowledgements due to the benefactor, are paid to our own merit and desert. By these steps our success in the world, owing, perhaps, entirely to the partiality our friends had for us, and which ought to make us humble and thankful, leads us to two odious vices, very incident to human nature, though very unbecoming the condition of it, *Pride* and *Ingratitude*.

Publick blessings make still less impression on the minds of men, than private benefactions. Very few think of any obligation lying upon themselves, for the good they enjoy in common with their neighbours. The peace, and quiet, and security, procured by the care and protection of *Government*, is rarely reflected on as creating any debt of *Gratitude* to those who watch for us. When *Tribute* is demanded by those to whom *Tribute* is due, men are apt to consider what they pay, as so much lost out of their property: whereas,

whereas, in truth, no part of our fortune makes a better return to us, than that which is bestowed to secure the whole, and to maintain peace and tranquillity in our days.

What mischief this temper of ingratitude produces in private and in publick life is but too manifest. Every man almost has his complaint against somebody, who has repaid his good offices with neglect and contempt, perhaps too with injuries; and in publick life one would imagine, that liberty was mistaken for a right to abuse the *Government*; and that the dignity of a free state consisted in acting without regard or reverence to those who are at the head of it.

But the effects of this perverse disposition acting in the affairs of this life, and among ourselves, are matters of light complaint, compared with its influence in matters of religion. We have all one great *Friend*, if we would acknowlege Him; one great *Governor*, if we would regard Him. But we are too apt to deal with *GOD*, as we do with the rest of our *Friends*; we intreat, we beg for His assistance, when we are in distress; and when we are relieved, we think but little of Him.

The common blessings of Providence are received and enjoyed by multitudes, who seldom or never think of the hand that supplies their wants. The former and the latter rain, and plentiful seasons, are ascribed to I know not what course of natural causes: but such causes are meant, to which no thanks are due; and this notion, contrary to reason and true philosophy, is the more readily embraced, because it furnishes men with the good things of the world, and lays them under no obligations to the Author of them. *St. Paul* says, That *GOD* at no time *left himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from Heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.* But how has this evidence been attended to! The constant and regular supply of our necessities makes us imagine, that we have a right to them by prescription,
and

and that we have a property in them as *Children of the Earth*: or, that if any thing is owing to wisdom, it is to *our own* wisdom, in managing the *Ground* and the *Seasons* to the best advantage. And thus, forgetting the Author of every good gift, and transferring the honour due to Him, to ourselves, we do in the language of the prophet, *Sacrifice unto our Net, and burn incense to our Drag, because by them our portion is fat, and our meat plenteous*, Hab. i. 16.

But however these common blessings, which come to all without distinction, are neglected and overlooked, one wou'd imagine, that signal deliverances wrought in favour of any people, and in which the arm of the LORD is made bare, and visible to every eye, should be had in perpetual remembrance, and be transmitted with sentiments of *Gratitude, Honour, and Religion*, to latest posterity.

But the case is far otherwise!

The history of the *Jews*, a people under the peculiar and visible government of Providence, is a series of rebellions and revolts against GOD, who had frequently and miraculously delivered them from the hands of their enemies. In their story the counsels of GOD with respect to them, and their neighbours, are laid open; and we see plainly the resentment of God's justice against a rebellious people, and in what manner he raised the nations round about them to punish and distress them. From their example we may learn to reckon with ourselves; and by considering our own case, know what to fear, and what to hope, from the justice and mercy of GOD: for the ways of Providence are unalterable, and the same wisdom and justice which governed the *Jews*, governs all the people of the world. The purposes of GOD are the same towards all nations, tho' not so discernable and manifest as in the history of the people of *Israel*. Profane history presents us many instances of nations subdued under the hand of their enemies, and fallen from

from a state of pride and sovereignty to the miserable condition of *slavery* and *captivity*. There the history leaves us. — It acquaints us with the facts; and the politicians of the world are busied in assigning causes for the surprising changes that have been in the nations. Some discern great wisdom and conduct on the side of the conquerors, and great mistakes and ill management on the side of the unfortunate: and all agree to ascribe in most cases, the events and successes of war to the number and bravery of the troops. But look into the *Sacred History*, where the counsels of GOD are displayed by his holy prophets, there will you see a plain reason, why the favourite nation, delivered most wonderfully and miraculously from the slavery of *Egypt*, was sold again into slavery to the *Philistines*, and other heathen *Nations* around them. Had this story been told in the common way of history, we should have thought this people extremely weak or unfortunate, in that they had no sooner escaped out of the hands of the great and powerful *Kings* of *Egypt*, but they became *Vassals* and *Bondsmen* to the little *Princes* bordering upon *Canaan*. But see the truth of the case: They became extremely unfortunate, because they were extremely wicked; their prosperity was their ruin, as it made them forget the LORD that bought them. And the strength, which they relied on as their security, betrayed them to their destruction; for they had to deal with Him, *who saveth not kings by the multitude of an host, nor giveth the battle always to the strong.*

Let no man be so weak as to imagine, that this method of Providence was peculiar and confined to the *Jews*, and that other nations were left to follow their own imaginations, and that GOD regarded them not; for the contrary appears in the same *Sacred History*, in which we have the account of the *Jewish Nation*. The counsels of GOD were not indeed so manifestly declared to other *Nations* by *Prophets* and *Messengers* from GOD; but the methods of justice were the same to all, and the *Nations* were left to Reason and Conscience, those great lights given to all alike, to interpret the conduct

conduct of Providence with respect to themselves. Were *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* destroyed by chance? No: it was by a fire from Heaven, commissioned to extirpate a wicked and profane people. Were the *Canaanites* overpowered by the arms of *Israel*? Certainly not: but God, who had waited in patience and forbearance, till the measure of their iniquity was full, delivered them up to destruction. Inquire what became of the great monarchies of *Affyria*, *Babylon*, and *Egypt*: You may see their doom foretold by the prophets. They were to be destroyed for their great *Idolatry* and *Corruption*: And the prophecies have been so remarkably fulfilled, that they are a standing lesson of instruction to all *Nations*, who have eyes to see, and hearts to understand. Thus too it fared at last with the favourite people of the *Jews*; they were often punished in mercy, and suffered to be miserable, that they might become better. They were from time to time admonished by the prophets; and at last **GOD** sent his *Son* to them: Him they slew and, hanged on a tree; and having filled up the measure of their iniquity, vengeance pursued them; and such vengeance as astonished the world, and does yet astonish it; for *there is no misery, like their misery*.

Final punishments, whereby *Nations* are intirely rooted out, are of use to us as examples and warnings to flee from the wrath to come; otherwise they can do us no service; for should we ever fall into so wretched a condition as to call down such judgments on our head, who can deliver us from the hand of the living **GOD**? But other judgments, how sharp and severe soever they may be, are the effects of mercy, and intended for our correction. — When ancient and late deliverances are forgotten, and have no effect upon the mind; when the voice of **GOD** speaking in his law, by his prophets, and by the ministers of his word, is no longer attended to; nothing remains but to apply sharper remedies, or to permit the people to fill up the full measure of their iniquities, and to perish in their sins. — 'Tis mercy to prevent *this fatal* evil, how corroding soever the means, made use of by mercy, may prove. The
perverseness

perverseſenſ and corruption of men's hearts juſtify the goodneſs and equity of God in inflicting ſuch puniſhments, and they muſt blame themſelves for not attending to the gentler and the kinder calls of Providence.

Perhaps there may be no great occaſion to juſtify before you the ways of God towards the children of *Israel*; we are all of one opinion to condemn their perverſeneſs and ingratitude: So much eaſier is it, to detect the faults of others, than to ſee and acknowledge our own!

But are we innocent from this great offence?

Let us conſider our own caſe: and ſurely we have great reaſon to conſider it, now the enemies of our *Religion* and *Liberty* appear with triumph in our land, and are in poſſeſſion of one ancient and powerful *Kingdom* united to the *Crown of England*.

Our unhappy diviſions in *Civil Matters*, I chuſe to paſs over in ſilence at this time and place; for I mean no reproach to any man; and without doubt our conduct towards GOD, and our regard to his *Holy Religion*, is the firſt and moſt intereſting conſideration now before us.

It is well known that the people of *Israel* were the choſen, the peculiar people of God; and diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the *Nations*, by a ſpecial providence directing them and their affairs. If you conſider this as the effect of partiality, and a weak fondneſs for one ſet of men more than another, you injure the *Attributes* of God, who acts by *wiſdom* and *juſtice* in all his dealings, and is no reſpecter of perſons. The houſe of *Abram* was called for the ſake of true *Religion*; to preſerve the knowledge of the one God among themſelves, to propagate it among the *Nations*, and to prepare the way for introducing it into the world, under proper circumſtances,

that *Seed*, in which all the *Nations* of the earth were to be blessed. As they were chosen for these great Purposes, so whenever they acted contrary to them, they ceased to be the chosen people, and were treated as enemies and rebels.

We are apt enough to boast of the purity of our *Religion*, and our *Reformation* from the errors and corruptions of the *Church of Rome*; and to flatter ourselves that we also are a peculiar people of God, and set up by Providence to be the *Bulwark* of the *Protestant Religion*. And indeed, if we judge from the many deliverances we have had, when our *Religion* and our *Liberties* were in the utmost danger, we have great reason to acknowledge the care and protection of Heaven over us. But remember still that we too are chosen to profess and maintain the truth of God's holy *Gospel*, and to bear our testimony against the corruptions, which have prevailed over a great part of the *Christian* world. If instead of acting up to this part assigned us by Providence, we grow careless and indifferent to our holy *Profession*, and suffer a spirit of irreligion to prevail over the nation, We forfeit our title to God's protection, we are no longer the chosen people, and must expect to be treated as enemies and deserters.

Our *present* situation is attended with fears and uneasy apprehensions; and if we look back and consider from whence we are fallen, we may see but too much reason to suspect that our fears are well grounded. How has this nation been blessed with the light of the *Gospel*? how wonderfully and how often has it been rescued from danger, when to human appearance there was no help at hand? Scarcely had the *Reformation* taken root among us, but a *Papish Queen*, made cruel by *Bigotry* and *Superstition*, ascended the *Throne*; and applied the only strong *Argument* of *Popery*, fire and faggot, to extinguish the light that was breaking in upon us. Not only the *Civil Powers* of this country were in the hands that meant to destroy the *Reformation*, but they were supported and united to the powers of *Spain*, whose *Prince* was become a partner of the *Throne* of *England*;

land; who lived to destroy (not in this country, blessed be God,) but in his own dominions *Thousands* and *Tens of Thousands* on the account of *Religion*.—Such were the powers under which the *Reformation* here, still in it's *Infancy*, was to struggle. It is painful to think of the miseries of that time; but think of them we ought, and bless God for the noble *Examples* of constancy and *Christian* courage, left by those whom he raised up to bear testimony, at the expence of their lives, to the truth of his *Religion*. Had this reign been long and prosperous, it is highly probable that *Philip* of *Spain* had left this country in the same condition he left his own; where the *Inquisition* rules with lordly and uncontrollable power, over the consciences and over the fortunes of the people. But God, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, made way for a *Protestant Princess* to ascend the *Throne*; in whose long and glorious reign, the *Reformation* took deep root, and the *Establishment* of this *national Church* was perfected. A work of great *wisdom* and *piety*, and so esteemed by the *Protestant Churches* abroad, however unhappily some among ourselves have forsaken her *Communion*.

The *Reign* of this glorious *Princess* was almost a continual *Scene* of deliverances from foreign *Invasions*, and *Disturbances* at home. And notwithstanding she was distressed on every side; by *Bulls* and *Curfes* from *Rome*, by *Armades* from *Spain*, by *Rebellions* in *England* and *Ireland*, she left this *Church* and *Nation* in *Peace* and *Security*: So wonderfully did the hand of God appear in our preservation.

Peace and *Security* under a weak *Government* which succeeded, produced by degrees a corruption in *Principles* and *Manners*; which ended at last in the ruin of this *Church* and *Nation*, and the destruction of a virtuous *Prince*, worthy of a far better fate. With him fell all our hopes of *Order* and *Government* in *Church* and *State*; *Anarchy* and confusion usurped the *Throne*; and religion was so divided into an almost infinite number of disagreeing *SECTS*, that the true one could hardly be found in the crowd.

But whilst we were under this thick *Cloud*, H E, who can bring light out of darkness, did, against all the hopes of human probability, restore to us our happy constitution in *Church* and *State*; not by force of *Arms*, or the power of *Princes*, but by over-ruling the passions of men, so that even *they* became instruments in restoring these *Blessings*, who had been greatly concerned in destroying them.

It will be wronging the nation to say that this deliverance at the *Restoration* was not received with great joy and pleasure. The joy indeed was excessive; and, as the case too often happens, left little room for sober and serious reflexions. The hearts of men being set open to the impressions and transports of joy, soon grew sensual: and the prosperity of the nation broke out into *Luxury*, and into all the Vices which naturally attend it. The sense of *Religion* decayed; and the very appearances of it were suspected, as a remnant of the hypocrisy with which the late times had been charged. And if we may judge by the performances of the *Stage*, which are formed to the taste of the people, there never was a time when lewdness, irreligion, and profaneness were heard with more patience.

But let us consider, what fruit the nation had of these things. I shall pass over all the calamities of that time, which were many, and mention only that, which is the cause and foundation of all we fear at present. In the next reign then, see *Popery* once more exalted to the *Throne* of *England*, and working to destroy the *Religion* and *Liberties* of the people; not by art and cunning and leisurely steps, but by open and avowed attempts upon our constitution. The laws for defence of our *Religion* were silenced by a dispensing power; *Papists* were placed on the *Bench*, on the *Seat* of *Judgment*, and at the head of *Colleges* in our *Universities*. Men's hearts sunk for fear, and the torrent seemed to carry all before it. One happy effect indeed it had; it awakened men to a sober sense of themselves and their condition; when they were put in *Fear*, they soon found *themselves to be but Men*; and they did the only reasonable thing they could do, apply to God for protection. The *Zeal* of the nation at that time
for

for the pure uncorrupted *Doctrines* of the *Gospel*, in opposition to the *Errors of Popery*, was perhaps greater than ever it had been from the days of the *Reformation*. The *Pastors* and their *Flocks* were equally animated with a constancy and a courage above temptation. And the *Clergy* of the *Established Church*, under all the fears and apprehensions that daily threatened them, maintained the *Doctrines* of the *Reformation*, with such learning, ability, and integrity, as did them honour both at home and abroad.

Thus were the hearts of the people turned as the heart of one man: Nor was it in vain they sought the *Lord*; for by a wonderful series of providence, he delivered them from their distress; and we have seen for many years the *Crown* upon the head of *Protestant Princes*, the natural *Guardians* of the *Religion* and *Liberties* of this *Country*.

If we have made a right use even of this last deliverance, let us fear no *Change*; for *G O D* will not forsake us, till we forsake him. But the prospect before us, the danger that draws near to us, call upon us to act uprightly with ourselves; and not to deceive our hearts with hopes that *G O D* will remember us, if we have forgotten him, and the great things he has done for us.

Our histories will always remind us of the great deliverances this nation has had, and we cannot forget them; nor did the *Jews* forget the wonders wrought in the land of *Egypt*, and the redemption of their *Ancestors* from *Captivity*. The historical remembrance of the facts *they had*; and *we have it*. The charge against the *Jews* expressed frequently by their forgetting God, is the same which *St Paul* brings against the heathen world: *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations; and their foolish heart was darkened.*

Do we stand clear of this charge? I wish to God we did.

Let

Let not *me* be the accuser of my nation, but let every man recollect what he has heard, and read, and seen, within the compass of a few years. Surely the Gospel of *Christ Jesus* was never treated with greater malice and contempt, by *Jews* or *Heathens*, than it has been in this *Christian Country*. Think not that I am condemning a sober enquiry into the truth of *Religion*: God forbid. But what shall we say, for the undisguised profaneness, and even blasphemy that has swarmed from the press: Many instances might be given; but *One* can never be forgotten; where the noblest and most exalted (a) *Hymn* of *Christian* devotion known to this *Church*, or any *Church* in the world, in which *Angels* and the blessed *Spirits* above join with us, has been perverted to the highest impiety and blasphemy, that ever the wickedness or malice of man's heart could conceive. This and other crimes of the same nature, are indeed chargeable on the authors: but how deplorable must the state of a nation be, when men find encouragement to provide such entertainment for the publick?

Look into common life, (not to pry into the secret faults of men,) but to see what is become of that sense of religion, which once animated the people. When *Papery* was breaking in upon us, our *Churches* were crowded; and unhappy was the man, who by sickness, or any real necessity was prevented in his attendance in the house of the *LORD*. Is it so now? Is not *Sunday* become a day of diversion to the *Great ones*, and a day of idleness and laziness to the *Little ones*? and has not this been manifestly followed by a great increase of great wickedness and violence among the lower people? *Theft* and *Rabbery*, which used to be secret crimes, now appear armed in our *Streets*; and are supported by numbers strong enough to defy the power of the magistrate. The unruly passions of men must be governed either by force, or by religion. Force cannot watch at all doors to prevent mischief; but religion is a *Centinel* placed in every heart, to guard it against wickedness, and it is but a natural consequence for men to grow violent and

(a) *The Te Deum.*

and injurious to others, in proportion as their sense of Religion decays.

But amidst this ruin of *virtue* and *religion*, one thing there is, that still may be thought matter of comfort, that the *Nation* is generally averse to *Papery*: But it is some abatement even to this comfort, to consider that the fear of *Papery* is not always a concern for the purity of the *Gospel*, but a fear merely of the powers of a *papist Church*. Those who have the least *religion*, and are grown wild with notions of *Liberty*, have reason to be apprehensive of ecclesiastical *Courts* and *Inquisitions* under the direction of *Papery*. But in this there is no virtue or merit; tho' it may be perhaps an happy circumstance at present, that there is something in *papery*, for those to be afraid of, who have no regard for *religion*.

But in the mean time has not *papery* been daily getting ground on us, by the artful and unregarded insinuations of the *Adversary*; and by applications of another kind, which do indeed but little honour to the *Converts*, or the *Converters*? The price at which a man may sell the *Protestant Religion*, is become almost a stated and well known *Sum*; and there are known *Markets* in which a man may sell the *Faith* in which he was born and bred. Such new purchased *profelytes* make no great *Figure*: for this method indeed has no effect, but upon the lowest people. And considering how improper an application this is to the *Conscience*, there is ground to suspect, that it is made use of rather to raise recruits against a proper time, than in hopes to make real *Converts*. I wish we may not soon feel the effects of this management so long connived at.

But to return to ourselves: To prevent this, and whatever else we may apprehend from the danger and displeasure of God, let us seek the Lord in our distress; and by acknowledging our own unworthiness, and the abuse of former mercies, render ourselves objects of his goodness, and forgiveness, we have but too exactly copied the behaviour
of

of the *Jews* in their days of prosperity; let us learn of them likewise in their adversity, and cry unto **GOD** for help against our enemies. Let us set a due value upon the blessings bestowed on us, and walk worthy of the light of the Gospel which has shone among us; that our conduct and behaviour may bear testimony to the truth which we profess.

And as in all the Dispensations of Providence towards us, it is expected from us that we should make use of the means which **GOD** hath put in our power, for our own defence and safety; let us on this occasion with cheerfulness, and the hearts of men who trust in **GOD**, be ready to employ our *persons* and our *fortunes* in the defence of our **KING** and **COUNTRY**, and the *Happy Constitution* in *Church* and *State*, under which we live. Let every man do his part: He who can do least, can pray for the peace of *Jerusalem*. Every man may reform one, that is himself, and fill up perhaps that number of the righteous, for the sake of which the *City* may be saved.

In a word, the time calls upon us to be serious; to think of **GOD**, and of **OURSELVES**; and according to the advice of the *Psalmist*, with which I shall dismiss you, *to stand in awe and fear not, to commune with our own heart, and in our Chamber and be still. To offer the Sacrifice of righteousness, and to put our Trust in the LORD.*

F I N I S.